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Big Mouth Blues

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Big Mouth Blues

When my mother-in-law opened her mouth to
talk, it was like the bellows of bad breath
fanning fumes that turn dreams into nightmares.

This gross cavern, with a pair of scythes for teeth,
drove Mariya away from me. Mariya will not come
back, because she believed what her mother

told her. I still remember my mother-in-law's
complaints when she came to visit. They had the
pungency of rotten red peppers. They burnt the love

out of Mariya's eyes. And left that cold
glare of betrayal. Now how could I make her
believe I was not cheating, that I

only got drunk and was raped? They wanted
to know why I did not go to the law, if that
was the truth. But they forgot feminists had

changed the law about rape, that it is no
crime if the victim is male. Yet those chappy,
flapping lips heaved up and down in smelly

outbursts about my infidelity and Mariya
being too good for a rotten, low-down, and
cheating miscreant who wrecked her happiness.

She would rattle on, and on, about my sins,
about God, and judgement day, and about
damnation. I then realised how those tusks

were determined to gouge this bond between Mariya
and me. All affection fled at the sting of her
breath. Not even patience or tolerance

could stand the heat of those fiery bellows.
I watched in shock as the ring burned on
Mariya's inflamed finger. I knew it was

Over.

On full moon nights, I go to the
deserted beach and sit under the coconut
trees. I watch the dancing splash of

the waves and listen to dizzying whispers
of the tropical breeze. I know I will find
no answers, in the cresty waves, to the

throbbing ache in me. The canopy palms
above can only offer rustling fans of sympathy.
Yet, in this charged loneliness, the pain beats

with a vibrant rhythm that promises a new joy. But
I am always afraid another walrus might
swim on to this shore asking questions.

— Yuxuf Abana